Impact of Information Literacy on Students' Academic Performance: The Case of American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola, Adamawa State

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ABSTRACT

This survey examines the impact of information literacy on students' academic performance in American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola. Three research questions guide this study. The population comprises all the undergraduate students that registered with the university library from the three schools. Based on Simple random sampling technique, a sample of 107 students is selected for the study. The collection instrument is a questionnaire. Out of 107 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 86 which give a response rate of 80.4% are returned and used for analysis. Data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency counts, percentage and tables. The findings reveal that delivering information literacy skills is one of the major needs for Information Literacy; library orientation constitutes the major responsibility of Information Literacy Unit, Information Literacy enhances accessibility, evaluation, processing and use of information for academic activities and diverse groups with different backgrounds, lack of learning zeal from the students, uncooperative attitude of library staff and inadequate orientation time are the major challenges associated with information literacy in American University of Nigeria Library.

Keywords: information, literacy skills, orientation, library, performance.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of information literacy (IL) has created a massive amount of discussion regarding its definition and implications for learners and librarians in an ever-changing information environment Tewell (2015).

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Information literacy according to Loftis, (2015) is the ability to discover and use various types of information and it is an essential skill for navigating the information age. Furthermore, Elmborg, (2006) is of the view that information literacy help students to " take control of their lives and their own learning to become active agents, asking and answering questions that matters to them and the world around them". Actually it provides useful perspective and operations for tertiary institution with which to interrogate and contend with a skill based schooling and argue that education should fulfill a purpose other than those creating efficient students. Educators have a responsibility to students to ensure that they can interact with complicated issues and critical information literacy to meet challenges according to Ellis (1996). So also, Lertputtarak (2008) explains that, quality research exposes academics to current information and sharing of research results with others. The significance of research in the academia according to him is that it enables academics to share insight, demonstrate academic scholarship and gain recognition for creative thinking.

As the volume of information is constantly increasing, search skills are required not only in order to gain access to the available information resources, but also to sift from the large quantity and utilize the most appropriate information resources. Similarly, Pezeshki-Rad and Zamani (2005) observed that, the real challenge of our time is not producing information or storing information, but getting people to gain and use information resources. To gain access and use these vast resources effectively, information users must learn to overcome information anxiety in order to explore the available information to enable them interprets and utilizes information for rational decision-making, analyzing, interpreting and presenting information for use in any environment. It is in this regard that the researcher set up to find out the impact of information literacy on students' academic performance in American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola.

Libraries worldwide are the nerve center of any higher institution. It is the power house of knowledge, student, lecturers and other members of the universities rely on the library to solve their academic activities

and recreation. The library holds various resources and tools that may assist the user to identify, retrieve and use materials in the library. This process is complex especially to first time users, based on this, it becomes librarian's responsibility to help them navigate this vast information resources. The importance of this unit to the academic performance of student's cannot be overemphasized. However, preliminary investigation conducted by the researcher revealed that the information literacy unit in American university of Nigeria, Yola does not carry out its statutory responsibilities as required, which affects the students searching skills in the areas of accessibility, evaluation, processing and use of retrieved information strategically for their academic activities. This unwanted situation prompted the researchers to carry out a study on the impact of information literacy on students in American University of Nigeria, Yola.

Objectives of the Study

1. The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:
2. To determine whether there is need for Information Literacy Unit in American University of Nigeria.
3. To ascertain the impacts of Information Literacy on students' academic activities in American University of Nigeria.
4. To find out the challenges associated with Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria Library.

The following research questions are asked,

1. Is there any need for Information Literacy in American university of Nigeria?
2. What are the impacts of Information Literacy on the students' academic activities in American university of Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges associated with Information Literacy in American university?

Information Literacy

The concept of information literacy has been defined according to the chartered institute of library and information professionals Broading-preston, J. CILIPS (2006) that, "an information literate person should have

the ability to be a lifelong learner and to be able to reflect on what one does". Information literacy (IL) is the ability to define ones information needs and then access, evaluate, process and use retrieved information strategically. Information literacy is a part of knowledge or learning that is about acquiring sets of skills or competencies. An information literate individual cares about quality of the answer he/she is investigating and is prepared to work to guarantee that quality.

The concept and practice of Information Literacy has not gained ground at grass root levels in the developing countries according to American Library Association ALA (1989). Also, Julien (2001) in Case (2007) defined information literacy as the ability to make efficient use of information sources. Information literacy skills include having the skills not only access to information, but also ascertain its veracity, reliability, bias, timeless, and context. Manda (2005) posit that Information literacy is important in the contemporary environment of rapid technology change and proliferation of information resources information and communication technology (ICT) advancements and the use of electronic resources, especially the internet promises to improve the flow of information to research and academic communities.

Importance of information literacy

Therefore, there is a very serious need for information literacy in Nigerian institutions. It is for that reason that Fields (2005) cited in Aziagba and Akpan (2010) where they stressed the need for the designing of information literacy assignment and curricula development with emphasis on prior-knowledge of the information users as it will help them increase their self-efficacy in the information search.

Also, Oghuvwu and Elekwa (2008) in a paper entitled "Importance of information literacy in the Information age" affirmed that education need a new model of learning - learning that is based on the information resources of the real world and learning that is active and integrated, not passive and fragmented. In such a situation, therefore, emphasis on information literacy resource-based learning was dreamed to manifest itself in a variety of ways.

In a survey of 36 University libraries carried out by Emmanuel and Timi (2011) on information literacy programmes in Nigeria, it is observed that the university libraries provide training on introductory information skills, database searching skills in their libraries. Alien (2000) reported that in order to improve undergraduate education, resource-based learning should be the standard model of learning on university campuses given that it allows for an active undergraduate learning environment. In order to come up with an educated and information literate graduate of the 21st century, who is able to find, evaluate and apply needed information, universities need to rethink the teaching-learning process and implement programs where information literacy skills are incorporated and taught.

Challenges in information literacy in Nigeria tertiary institutions
There are also challenges in information literacy in Nigeria tertiary institutions today. It is in that regard that kavulya (2003) stressed that, students have to obtain grapple with a lot of search skills in different discipline among different databases and print resources which is a challenge.In the same manner Winfred and Manning in Selematsela (2005) observed that the student population of today is very diverse and lecturers handles classrooms that represent students of different colors, racial and ethnic groups, religion languages, backgrounds, ages and learning styles and computer skills. As such, students enter the university with a greater polarity of skills thereby making it difficult for academic and library staff to pitch information literacy sessions at the same level as stated by Moore and Abson in Selematsela, (2005).

In any case, Winfield and Manning in Selematsela, (2005) noted that diversity in the case of students involves two issues, namely intergroup and individual differences. Intergroup differences are more pronounced in socio-economic levels, racial, ethnic and language groups and physical ability. Within the intergroup differences and within each learner group, there are individual differences in learning rates, attitudes and motivational rates. Which have a bearing in achievement outcomes that academic and library staff must accommodate.

Another challenge is helping Students to Develop Better Research

Skills, where Troll in Selematsela (2005) is of the view that students tend to use the Internet for playing games, chatting, downloading music and movies, such that if they turn to scholarly electronic resources licensed by libraries, their search skills are poor and they are unable to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate resources for their assignments. Undergraduate students from the disadvantage backgrounds have little experience of using a research library. This is summed up by Kaufman in Selematsela, (2005), who says "students come complete with the confidence that they can find anything they want to know or need on the Web."

A change in student learning zeal and the curriculum is another challenge facing information literacy. Troll in Selematsela, (2005) observes that "modern students" behavior leaves much to be desired. The perception is that they read less and have less intellectual curiosity. Or it could be that they are too busy to explore and learn about what libraries have to offer. The other factor might be that academic departments are assigning fewer projects that require use of library resources. The postgraduate honor students and students can enroll in pre-professional programme are more frequently library users than master's and doctoral level students and those majoring in business, mathematics or sciences. Zabel in Salematsela, (2005) noted that students regard library instruction as an isolated activity, unless they are required to apply what they have learned. The answer lies in delivering instruction that is directly applicable to students` projects. This needs the collaboration of academic department and the library staffs.

Technology Issue is another challenge facing the information literacy. Insufficient computer facilities and slow internet connections makes efficient information literacy teaching very difficult. To compound the problem, some students do not have computing skills. The problem of slow connectivity affects the time frame in which a topic could be taught and its completion according to Daskiw and Forsyth (2003).

METHOD

Survey research design was used for this study. Questionnaire was used to gather information from students on the impact of information literacy

skill. A total of 107 copies of questionnaire were distributed to student, out of which 87 were retrieved giving a response rate of 66%. Out of the 86 respondents, 59 (68.6%) were males and 27 (31.4%) are females. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency counts, percentage and tables. The data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Response rate

Schools	Questionnaire			
	Distributed		Returned	
	F	%	F	%
Art and Sciences	57	53.3	45	42.1
Entrepreneurship	33	30.8	27	25.2
Information Technology and Communication	17	15.9	14	13.1
Total	**107**	**100**	**86**	**80.4**

Source: Survey, 2016

Table 2 shows the equipment found in the Information Literacy Unit of the university library. The result shows that 58(67.4%) of respondents indicated OPAC, 61(70.9%) indicated projector, 59(68.6%) indicated electronic databases, while, 69(80.2%) indicated computers. On those that indicated that these equipment were not found in the library, the result shows 28(32.6%), 25(29.1%), 27(31.4%) and 17(19.8%) respectively. On a whole, 71.8% indicated that equipment were found, while 28.2% indicated that they were not found in the library.

Table 2: Equipment used in conducting the research

Equipment	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
OPAC	58	67.4	28	32.6
Projector	61	70.9	25	29.1
Electronic Databases	59	68.6	27	31.4
Computers	69	80.2	17	19.8
Total	**247**	**71.8**	**97**	**28.2**

Source: Survey, 2016

Table 3 shows the Frequency of Information Literacy Programmes carried out in the university. From the result, 9 (10.5%) indicated daily, 23 (26.7%) indicated weekly, 51 (59.3%) indicated monthly, while, 3 (3.5%) indicated never.

Table 3: Frequency of Information Literacy Programmes Carried Out in the University

Frequency	F	%
Daily	9	10.5
Weekly	23	26.7
Monthly	51	59.3
Never	3	3.5
Total	**86**	**100**

Source: Survey, 2016

Table 4: The Need for Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria

The need for Information Literacy	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Delivering information literacy skills	71	82.6	15	17.4
Interfacing between the teaching faculty and resources	64	74.4	22	25.6
Providing information access tool	68	79.1	18	20.9
Teaching ability to recognize the need for information	56	65.1	30	34.9
Teaching, locating and accessing information	62	72.1	24	27.9
Evaluating information resources obtained from different sources	51	59.3	35	40.7
Organizing, applying and communicating information to others	49	57.0	37	43.0
Total	**421**	**69.9**	**181**	**30.1**

Source: Survey, 2016

Table 4 shows the need for Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria. The table revealed that 71 (82.6%) of the respondents agree that the Information Literacy unit is delivering information literacy skills, 64 (74.4%) agree that the Information Literacy unit is interfacing between the teaching faculty and resources, 68 (79.1%) agree that the Information Literacy unit is providing information access tool, 56 (65.1%)

agree that the Information Literacy unit is teaching ability to recognize the need for information, 62 (72.1%) agree that the Information Literacy unit is teaching, locating and accessing information, 51 (59.3%) agree that the Information Literacy unit is evaluating information resources obtained from different sources, while 49 (57.0%) agree that the Information Literacy unit is organizing, applying and communicating information to others.

Table 5: The Impacts of Information Literacy on the Students' Academic Activities in American University of Nigeria

Impacts of Information Literacy	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Enhance accessibility, evaluation, processing and use of information for academic activities.	74	86.1	12	13.9
Enhances quick access to information/research materials.	50	58.1	36	41.9
Enhance the quality of research work.	53	61.6	33	38.4
Makes research easier	61	70.9	25	29.1
Helps to identify, locate and effectively use information sources and formats	49	57.0	37	43
Helps in achieving greater academic success	55	64.0	31	36
Development of searching skills	69	80.2	17	19.8
Helps in knowledge development	51	59.3	35	40.7
Total	**462**	**67.2**	**226**	**32.8**

Source: survey, 2016

Table 5 shows the impacts of Information Literacy on the students' academic activities in American University of Nigeria. The result shows that 74 (86.1) of the respondents agree that it enhance accessibility, evaluation, processing and use of information for academic activities, 50 (58.1%) agree that it enhance quick access to information/research materials, 53 (61.6%) agree that it enhances the quality of research work, 61 (70.9%) agree that it makes research easier, 49 (57.0%) agree that it helps to identify, locate and effectively use information sources and formats, 69 (80.2%) agree that it helps in achieving greater academic success, 69 (80.2%) agree that it develops searching skills, while 51 (59.3%) agree that it helps in knowledge development

Table 6: The Challenges Associated with Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria Library

Challenges associated with Information Literacy	Yes		No	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**
Diverse groups with different backgrounds	48	55.8	38	44.2
Lack of learning zeal from the students	71	82.6	15	17.4
Insufficient orientation equipment	28	32.6	58	67.4
Slow internet connection	23	26.7	63	73.3
Lack of ICT skills	29	33.7	57	66.3
Poor infrastructural facility	34	39.5	52	60.5
Uncooperative attitude of library staff	65	75.6	21	24.4
Obsolete equipment	30	34.9	56	65.1
Inadequate orientation time	60	69.8	26	30.2
Total	388	50.1	386	49.9

Source: Survey, 2016

Table 6 shows the challenges associated with Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria Library. The result shows that 48 (55.8%) of the respondents agree that on diverse groups with different backgrounds, 71 (82.6%) agree on lack of learning zeal from the students, 65 (75.6%) agree on uncooperative attitude of library staff, while 60 (69.8%) agree on inadequate orientation time. However, 58 (67.4%) of the respondents disagree on insufficient orientation equipment, 63 (73.3%) disagree on slow internet connection, 57 (66.3%) disagree on lack of ICT skills, 52 (60.5%) disagree on poor infrastructural facility and 56 (65.1%) disagree on obsolete equipment.

From the result collected, the findings of study revealed that delivering information literacy skills is one of the major needs for Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria. This means that acquiring information literacy skills to students is the major aspect needed for information literacy unit to undertake as its core mandate in the university library. In support of this view, Fields (2005) in Aziagba and Akpan (2010) calls for the designing of information literacy assignment and curricula development with emphasis on prior-knowledge of the information users as it will help them increase their self-efficiency in the information search.

This study also revealed that library orientation constitutes the major responsibility of Information Literacy Unit in American University

of Nigeria Library. This finding is in line with the view of Ojedokun (2007) who argues that the research process which requires a user to find information on a particular subject/topic depends on the users' skillful use of the appropriate access tools. Access tools include indexes and abstracts, bibliographies, catalogues and web search tools. Teaching ability to recognize the need for information is another responsibility of information literacy unit. The major findings of this study are as follows:-

1.   The study revealed that delivering information literacy skills is one of the major needs for Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria, Yola

2.   This study also revealed that library orientation constitutes the major responsibility of Information Literacy in American University of Nigeria, Yola.

3.   This study further reveals lack of learning zeal from the students, uncooperative attitude of Library staff and inadequate orientation time are the major challenges associated within formation literacy in American University of Nigeria, Yola.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The provision of library and information services to Nigerians is a positive step toward making information widely available to the people to access and use to develop the country. But the fact is that the information literacy unit in American University is not fully operational, hence the users of the library do not explore the opportunities accorded to them. Due to the challenges highlighted in the text, the students do not utilize the information resources made available to them for their academic activities. Diverse groups with different backgrounds, lack of learning zeal from the students, uncooperative attitude of library staff and inadequate orientation time are the major challenges associated with information literacy in American University of Nigeria Library. These challenges are high enough to generate concern, and require the attention of all stakeholders, if they want the university to continue growing into a world class university. The numerous challenges identified in connection

with this endeavour can be surmounted through the strategies enumerated, of which proactive actions by the library and information professionals are keys. Based on this research therefore, for a long lasting, effective and efficient information literacy unit, the following measures are hereby recommended:

1. There should be organized training of the students on the use of information resources so as to efficiently assist them in accessing and retrieving information for research and other academic activities.
2. Students should be encouraged to partake in information literacy classes, so as to enhance their accessibility, evaluation, processing and use of information for academic activities
3. Use of library should be compulsory to each and every student and it should be added to their curriculum

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